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News Release



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Service Proposes to List Casey's June Beetle as Endangered With Critical Habitat

Carlsbad, CA - The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announced today a proposal to list the Casey's June beetle as endangered under the Endangered Species Act (Act), and to designate critical habitat on approximately 777 acres of land located in the southern portion of the City of Palm Springs, Riverside County, California.

An advance copy of the proposed rule is available online through the *Federal Register* at [Federal Register Public Inspection](#). However, this copy does not include maps. The official copy, including maps, will be published in the *Federal Register* on July 09, 2009.

Comments and information on the proposed rule, may be submitted electronically to <http://www.regulations.gov>, or in writing to: Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS-R8-ES-2009-0019; Division of Policy and Directives Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 222, Arlington, VA 22203. Comments will be accepted until September 08, 2009. We will not accept e-mail or faxes and all comments received will be posted on <http://www.regulations.gov>. Requests for a public hearing must be submitted electronically or in writing to one of the addresses above by August 24, 2009.

Casey's June beetle is less than an inch long and has a dusty brown or whitish color, with brown and cream longitudinal stripes on its wing covers and back. It inhabits areas typically associated with Sonoran desert scrub communities located on broad, gentle sloping, depositional surfaces formed at the base of the Santa Rosa Mountains in the Coachella Valley region. The beetle lives in underground burrows but emerges during the mating season – sometime between late March and early June, with abundance peaks generally occurring in April and May.

The only known population of Casey's June beetle is found in the Palm Canyon Wash area which runs through the southern part of the City of Palm Springs, California, and on portions of Agua Caliente Indian Tribal lands. Based on currently available data, the beetle's distribution is confined to an area of less than 800 acres.

Habitat loss and fragmentation for Casey's June beetle has continued to increase since the early 1990s. It is estimated that three percent of its habitat is being lost annually, and projections indicate almost all remaining habitat will be lost by the year 2020. The species is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range. due to continued habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation from development and other human-use activities.

Casey's June beetle is not a covered species under the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), nor is it proposed to be covered under the draft Agua Caliente Tribal HCP. Therefore, the areas covered by these HCP efforts are not being considered or proposed for exclusion at this time.

Of the estimated 777 acres of essential habitat in the Palm Canyon Wash area being proposed for critical habitat designation, 343 acres are on Agua Caliente Tribal lands and 434 acres are on private and locally owned lands.

Proposed critical habitat lands are identified in one unit. The unit is considered occupied by Casey's June beetle and includes areas west of South Palm Canyon Drive, Palm Canyon Wash, and Smoketree Ranch. Additionally, the unit includes two areas east of Palm Canyon Wash and south of East Palm Canyon Drive. Approximately 45 percent of this unit is on Agua Caliente Tribal land.

Critical habitat identifies geographic areas that contain physical and biological features essential for the conservation of a threatened or endangered species and that may require special management considerations or protection. The designation of critical habitat does not affect land ownership or establish a refuge, wilderness, reserve, preserve, or other conservation area. It does not allow government or public access to private lands. Federal agencies that undertake, fund or permit activities that may affect critical habitat are required to consult with the Service to ensure such actions do not adversely modify or destroy designated critical habitat.

The Service is preparing a draft economic analysis of the proposed critical habitat that will be made available for public review and comment at a later date.

The official copy of the proposed rule and other information about the Casey's June beetle will be posted on July 09, 2009, at <http://www.regulations.gov>, or www.fws.gov/Carlsbad, or by contacting the Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office at 760-431-9440.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov/